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Tramp: Sagas of High Adventure in the Vanishing World of the Old Tramp Freighters

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evaluation of the practices followed during World War II. Gibson concludes that "American merchant seamen who served in oceangoing service during World War II performed their duties under a legal framework which, in light of all recognized international law, placed them into the role of combatants integrated within the armed forces of the United States." The book provides a source for legislative action in recognition of the hazardous nature of the merchant seaman's vocation in wartime and argues for benefits appropriate to those granted the honorably discharged member of the Armed Forces. Casualty rates sustained by the U.S. merchant marine in the first year of World War II were the highest of any group supporting the war effort.

Throughout the book, Gibson is judicial and rational in his presentation. He shows how much the Navy has depended upon merchant shipping in time of war and quotes administrative orders which authorized military and naval commanders to give orders to merchant ships and to have disciplinary control over merchant seamen in overseas areas. He also deals at length with the difficult problem of determining when—and in many cases if—merchant ships become part of the military force.

As a layman rather than a qualified practitioner of maritime law, Gibson showed courage in undertaking this formidable task that, to this reviewer's knowledge, has not been attempted before. Because of the

technical and legal basis of the book, its appeal is unavoidably narrow and of questionable interest to the general public. Also, despite the author's effort, the book is not without warts: there are an inexcusably large number of misspelled words; the author's system for citations is erratic and incomplete; and the bibliography is not annotated. Yet, Mr. Gibson must be credited for his pioneering spirit and energy in assembling such a volume of diverse documents on this subject. While his purpose in compiling the book is transparent, an attempt to bolster the case for giving military veteran status and benefits to merchant seamen of the World War II era, it still does not detract from the technical value of the book.

LANE C. KENDALL
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Ret.)

Krieger, Michael J. *Tramp: Sagas of High Adventure in the Vanishing World of the Old Tramp Freighters*. San Francisco, Calif.: Chronicle Books, 1986. 143pp. \$35

Plan an evening to sit down with this book. A pipe, snifter of brandy, friendly fireplace, and a good atlas are appropriate. Prepare yourself to embark on a journey into an aspect of seafaring that is marked by high adventure, hard work, little glamour, and even less profit.

As you page through this comfortable, well-layed out book, you will be enthralled by the text and the photographs, especially the photographs. Tales of the past, both real

132 Naval War College Review

and fictitious, will leap into your mind as you travel the Mediterranean, Norwegian Sea, Baltic, Indian Ocean, and into the "dog-holes" of the Pacific.

Tales of the sea abound, and many of them take place on tramp steamers. One that might easily be representative of *Tramp* is Captain F.C. Hendry's short story titled "Easting Down." This example is no better than the likes of those posed by Joseph Conrad, Jan de Hartog, and Angus MacDonald, or the true tale of Captain Carlsen in the *Flying Enterprise*. However, it is an excellent slice of that which Krieger and photographer Judy Howard depict so beautifully in *Tramp*.

In this particular example, Captain Hartnell, his third mate, Mr. Birnie, and a rebellious—at least single-minded—deckhand named Kelly dare to replace the screw and tail shaft at sea on a 5,000-ton tramp. This old girl had the misfortune of losing those appurtenances in a daring passage from Cape Town to Port Pirie, South Australia, by way of the "Roaring Forties." The master's goal: beat out a competitor for a cargo of zinc concentrate. The decision to pursue a passage off the beaten track and the determination of the three heroes is demonstrative of the importance of cargo to the continued existence of a tramp. The excitement, adventure, and true seamanship which prevail in this story, I invite the reader to pursue. This narrative illustrates that which *Tramp* depicts so successfully and beautifully.

Tramp is a superb book, especially the photography by Judy Howard. The narrative is excellent, but tends to be more travelogue than maritime text on how the tramp business works. It is the photographs that carry the images of the beautiful lines of cruiser and counter sterns, plumb bows and, by today's standards, tiny holds serviced by relatively miniscule booms. Tramps are, at once, a business, a romance, and a way of life.

One criticism, which must be taken with a grain of salt, for this reviewer loves all ships—particularly the delightful selection made by this author and his photographer—is that although the book's title is *Tramp*, included are ships such as *S.T. Crapo* and *George A. Sloan*, which are not truly in the tramp trade.

That notwithstanding, this is a superior book which will be treasured and enjoyed by anyone who has ever wished for, or delighted in, ". . . a merry yarn from a laughing fellow rover, and quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over."

J.A. PESCHKA, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy

Wilson, George C. *Super Carrier: An Inside Account of Life Aboard the World's Most Powerful Ship, the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy*. New York: Macmillan, 1986. 273pp. \$19.95

It is easy to be overwhelmed and captivated by the obvious on an aircraft carrier: its size, day and